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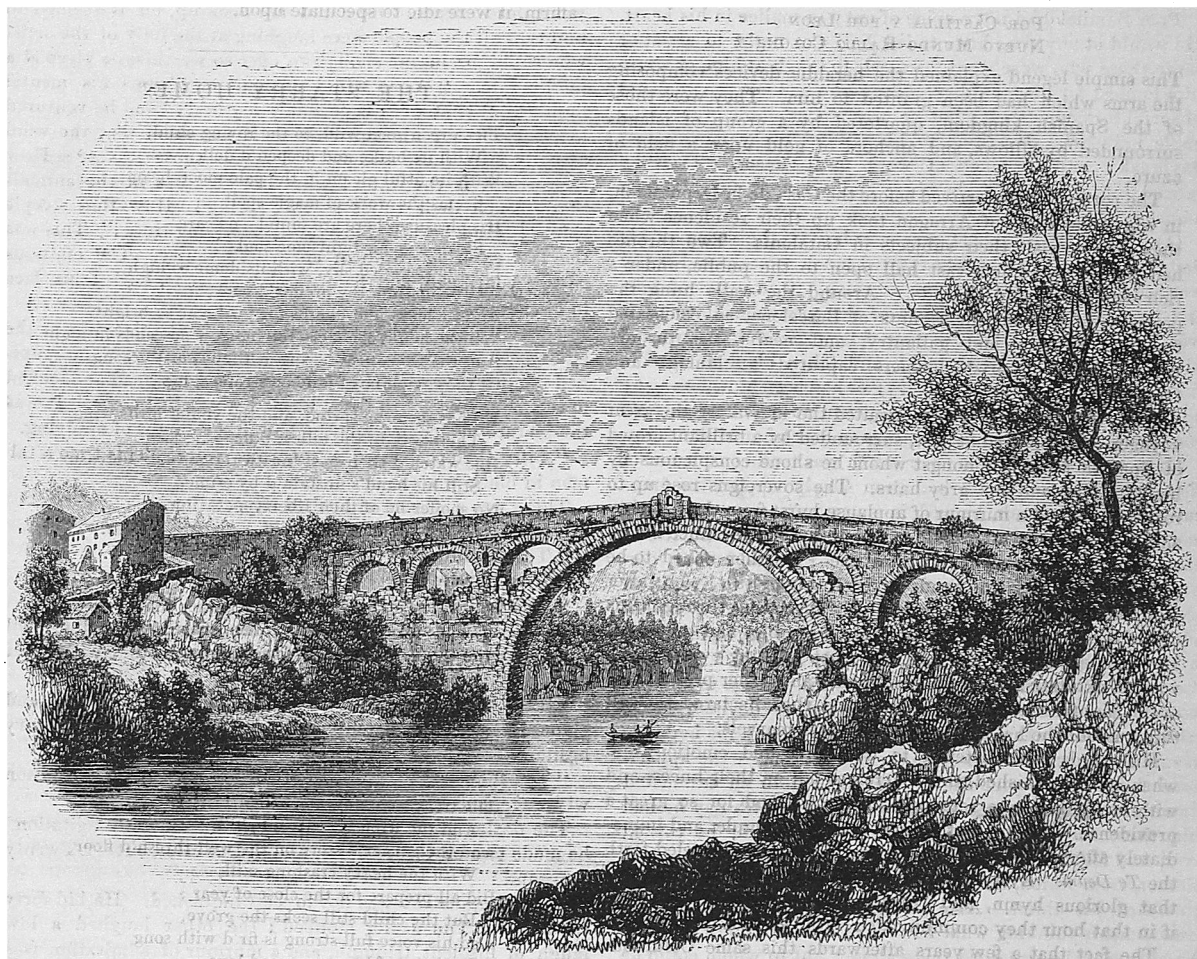
THE TOWN AND BRIDGE OF CERET.

IN the valley of the Tech, in the Pyrenees Orientales, lies the little town and commune of Ceret. The former, as the name implies, is a department of France in the eastern extremity of the Pyrenean mountains, bounded on one side by that part of the Mediterranean called the Gulf of Lyons, and on the other by the department of the Arriege, the mountains themselves forming the natural line of division between it and Spain. The whole department is not much larger than Hampshire; or, to speak more correctly, its area contains about 1,600 square miles, with a population of rather less than 165,000 persons, or about 103 persons per square mile. The principal town in this small and very rural department of France is Perpignan, on the Tet, and the next in importance is Ceret.

The town of Ceret contains about 2,750 inhabitants; but it

populations of from two to three thousand each, are among them.

Ceret possesses a Court of Justice and a high school, and is surrounded by ancient lofty walls, said to have been built by the Romans during their occupation of Spain. But, besides present interest, Ceret has also its historical associations; for in its neighbourhood were fought several battles between the Roman armies and the troops under Hannibal, the African general, who, as we are told by Livy, at one time encamped in the Valley of Elne, at no great distance from Ceret. In 1793, a battle was fought between the French and the Spanish in a plain near at hand; and later still, the neighbourhood has been the scene of various encounters between the marshals of Napoleon and the generals of the allied



THE BRIDGE OF CERET, OVER THE RIVER TECH, IN THE EASTERN PYRENEES.

is surrounded by a tolerably well cultivated district, containing nearly as many people as the town itself. Like other places out of the immediate range of the tourist, Ceret has its curiosities and antiquities; but one of the greatest glories of the town is the bridge shown in our engraving. It consists of a single arch of 144 feet span; and, says M. Merime, writing in 1834, "the massive style of its architecture is only equalled by the simple grandeur of its design." It is the opinion of many that it was constructed in the fourteenth century. The Tech flows down from the mountains in a rapid and tumultuous manner, till it almost reaches the town, when it widens considerably, and forms a kind of natural lake on the eastern side of it. Several small towns and villages are dotted about the river and its tributaries; Prats de Mollo, Arles, Le Boulon, St. Laurens, Bellagarde, &c., with their rustic

armies—to say nothing of the masterly retreats of the former from the Peninsula, or the bold entry of Wellington into France.

But the view from the heights around Ceret suggest other and better thoughts than these. Looking down upon the rich valleys and smiling homesteads at his feet, the philosophic tourist may well deplore the fact, that war and evil passions should make a desert of so beautiful a spot, and that in the pursuit of the false and meretricious, men should neglect the true and beautiful. It is pleasanter, from such a spot, and with such a prospect before him, to think of the time when the Romans carried the arms and the civilisation of Italy into Gaul; and to trace in his memory the various fortunes of the soil—from the Romans to the Visigoths, and from them to the Moors, then again to the Franks, and then to the Spanish, till, in 1640, it was finally incorporated into the kingdom of France.